



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1344.8.55.001 - ACT Stats, 2006

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 11/07/2006

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What will the 2006 Census reveal for the ACT and Queanbeyan Areas?

In 28 days the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) will be conducting the **15th National Census of Population and Housing**. The Census aims to take a "snapshot" of Australia every five years - collecting vital information on the social, economic and housing characteristics of Australian society. A successful Census will benefit all Australians and their communities.

Benefits of the Census

The Census provides characteristics of the Australian population and its housing within small geographic areas. This is important as it is the only time that this level of data is collected by the ABS across a broad range of subject areas.

Census figures form the basis of distributing Commonwealth funds to the states and territories. These figures are also used to determine electoral boundaries and calculate the number of members to be elected to the House of Representatives from each state and territory.

The data collected in the Census is used by all sections of the community, from state and federal governments to town planners, community groups, students and businesses. This information can support planning, administration, policy development and evaluation activities. It can also be used to help plan basic services such as housing, social security, transport, education, industry support, shops and hospitals.

In this Census, new questions have been included to collect more information in areas such as disability, volunteering and unpaid work.

Time Capsule

Once again people across Australia are given the opportunity to have their name-identified information kept securely by the National Archives of Australia for 99 years. People who may be interested in accessing this kind of information in the distant future include genealogists, historians, academics, social analysts, journalists and family members in the twenty-second century.

Unless people explicitly indicate on their Census form that they want to participate in this project, their identifiable information will be stripped and their form destroyed after processing, as per normal.

ACT Overview

A brief look at some of the figures from the **2001 Census of Population and Housing** revealed that:

The median age in the ACT was 32 years in 2001 compared with 30 years in 1996. For Australia as a whole the median age was 35 years in 2001.

The proportion of people aged 65 years and over in the ACT increased to 8.3% (25,820 people) in 2001, from 7.1% in 1996.

The majority of people counted in the ACT were Australian born (73.9% or 228,363 people). This compares with 72.6% for Australia. The largest overseas born group comprised people born in the United Kingdom at 5.5% (16,999 people) followed by New Zealand at 1.3% (3,971 people).

English was the only language spoken at home by 82.4% (254,839 people) of the population, compared with 80.0% for Australia. Of those people who spoke a language other than English at home, the highest proportion spoke Chinese languages (1.6% or 4,933 people), followed by Italian (1.2% or 3,713 people).

Indigenous people

The number of people who identified as being of Indigenous origin increased by 23.4% to 3,576 people in 2001, up from 2,899 people in 1996. This was the largest percentage increase of all states and territories. The Indigenous population represented 1.2% of the ACT population in 2001. This compares with 2.2% for Australia.

This large increase is not entirely explained by migration and natural increase (i.e. births and deaths) but is thought to be due to the increased propensity of Indigenous people to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islanders.

The Indigenous Australian population was relatively young, with a median age of 19 years in 2001, compared with a median age of 33 years for the total population. Of Indigenous Australians counted in Canberra-Queanbeyan, 38.8% were aged less than 15 years and 1.2% were aged 65 years or older. The percentages for the total Canberra-Queanbeyan population were 21.3% and 8.4% respectively.

As with previous Censuses, Indigenous collectors will be used to count other Indigenous people where possible. This will include nominated discrete communities as well as rural and urban areas.

Housing characteristics

There were 121,974 dwellings counted in the ACT in 2001, an increase of 6.5% (7,404 dwellings) since 1996. Of these dwellings in 2001, 94.2% (114,842) were occupied private dwellings, 5.7% (6,908) were unoccupied private dwellings and 0.2% (224) were non-private dwellings.

Family type

The 2001 Census counted 80,328 families in ACT, an increase of 5.2% since 1996. In 2001 almost half (49.0% or 39,326 families) of all families were couples with children, down from 52.6% in 1996. There were corresponding increases in the proportion of couple families without children (33.9%), up from 30.7% in 1996, and one parent families (15.6%), up from 15.1% in

1996.

Tertiary Qualifications

There were 55,654 people in the labour force with a degree or higher qualification in Canberra-Queanbeyan at the 2001 Census. This was 31.1% of the labour force, the highest percentage of any Australian capital city. In 1991, 22.9% of the Canberra-Queanbeyan labour force had university qualifications.

Of those with university qualifications, 66.7% held a Bachelor degree, 19.7% held a higher degree and 13.6% held a postgraduate diploma. More than half (52.1%) of those with university qualifications were male, and one third (33.9%) of all people with university qualifications had completed their highest qualification since 1996.

Travelled to work by Car

In 2001 there were 125,016 employed people in Canberra-Queanbeyan who travelled to work by car. This was 80.7% of employed people, the second highest percentage (after Adelaide) of all Australian capital cities. Most people travelled alone, with only 11.3% of people who travelled to work by car travelling as a passenger.

Travelled to work via Public transport

In 2001 there were 9,427 employed people in Canberra-Queanbeyan who travelled to work by public transport. This represented 6.1% of employed people. The proportion of people who travelled to work by public transport has fallen over the last ten years from 9.2% in 1991 and 7.6% in 1996.

People who Cycled or walked

Of the 154,868 employed people in Canberra-Queanbeyan at the 2001 Census, 9,186 walked or cycled only to work. This represented 5.9% of employed people. The proportion of people who walked or cycled only to work increased from 5.7% in 1991.

eCensus

In 2006, everyone in Australia will have the option of either completing their Census the traditional way (paper form) or electronically (eCensus). The eCensus will allow people to complete the Census via the Internet.

The eCensus has the potential to improve data collection, especially where Collectors face challenges in collecting completed forms (like in secure apartment buildings or in rural Australia).

What will the 15th National Census of Population and Housing on 8th August 2006 reveal for the ACT and Queanbeyan Areas???

This page last updated 12 February 2007

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